Non-formal Education for Rural Development in China:
Comparative Study of Sunshine Program and Community Learning Center in Yunnan

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Abstract

This research explores non-formal education in the context of rural China. The overall aims of the study are to investigate the role of education in the changing rural scenario and to explore how tailor-made non-formal training programs were planned and implemented in order to meet diverse learning needs. More specifically, the research firstly studies rural context in contemporary China at macro level, and then go in-depth by comparing two non-formal training programs.

In order to comprehensively answer the research question of the study, secondary analysis was utilized. The national context and the comparative case study were researched through analyzing data from national reports, program reports, government policies, newspaper, etc.

Major findings of the study reveal that in China, education plays a vital role in fostering rural development in terms of income generation and empowerment of the disadvantaged group. Besides providing universal 9-year-compulsory education to all, various types of non-formal education programs were launched to facilitate rural people in many aspects. As for successfully installing a NFE program, there are some critical elements. Firstly, a NEF program should be well-planned with high relevance to the local context. Secondly, continuous technical and financial support by government is important for the sustainability of the program. Finally, active participation of local community plays a crucial role in maintaining accountability. Yet, education is not a magical cure, to achieve development in rural areas, cooperation need to be formed between different levels of government agencies and among schools, research institutions and agricultural industry.

Keywords

rural development, non-formal education, income generation, empowerment, cooperation.
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Introduction

1.1. Background

For the next two decades, it is estimated that the majority of the population living in developing countries will continue to be rural. This is even more the case for the least developed countries where rural people will exceed 55 percent of the total population in 2030 (IFAD, 2010). Whilst this large proportion of world’s population are often neglected in the development framework, widening gaps between urban and rural areas in terms of income, welfare, resources and educational status are to be found in most developing countries. This implies that the development challenge of these nations will still be related to rural trends and conditions.

The most valuable asset in rural areas is people. Rural development basically rests with the development of human resources in rural areas. Thus, education, which is supposed to improve the overall quality of the labor force and achieve well-rounded development of human beings, lies in the heart of the rural development issue. It is the key to turning the large population from a burden to a potential of growth.

Development in its nature is a set of changes. The process of rural development is usually accompanied by rapid urbanization, agriculture industry transformation, technology development etc. Education has been regarded as a potential agent for social change and development and therefore interventions in this direction have been planned and executed at the national and international levels (Karanam & Panigrabi, 2010). Proper training can help rural people to cope with such socio-economic changes, as well as to seize the development opportunity to improve their livelihood.

As one of the essential parts of Education for All (EFA), education for rural people is not new. Previous focus of rural education was given to providing basic education to all since the declaration of EFA. However, as stated by Chinapah (2010) at the International Symposium of Education for Rural Transformation (ERT), “the dynamics of rural transformation in the ‘globalized’ world has created new educational imperatives that call for a re-evaluation of present educational policies and priorities and the re-examination of the role of education and learning (formal, non-formal and informal) for rural people from rather new perspectives” (p.1), there is an urgent need for rethinking education for rural contexts. Re-examining education in rural areas requires first reviewing the characteristics of the rural sector, and then considering the position of education in the current rural development debate (FAO & UNESCO, 2002). Non-formal education (NFE) which was formerly perceived as a second choice compared to formal education, with its merits of diversity and flexibility, then become popular within assistance projects, especially in those for comprehensive rural development. There are various kinds of NFE which can be utilized, while the acquisitions of literacy and numeracy as well as practical technical and vocational skills are centrally positioned. One single type of education can
neither meet diversified learning needs of rural people nor to cope with the changing situation. In an environment increasingly shaped by non-farming activities, and in a policy context dominated by the poverty reduction agenda, education for rural development requires a holistic approach going beyond the narrow boundaries of the traditional education and training.

In China, around 900 million people live in rural area. As a result, rural development has always been the first priority of the country. Particularly with economic and social development, changing industrial structure and rapid urbanization, rural China is experiencing dynamic changes. On one hand, agricultural industry needs productive workforce equipped with modern agro-technology, on the other hand, huge amounts of surplus labor force are migrating from rural to urban areas and seek to work in non-agriculture industries. Also it is essential for reaching the most disadvantaged groups in remote rural areas for reducing disparities between urban and rural area. Then, education and training for rural people stands out as a core for tackling comprehensive development of rural residence, villages and agriculture industry. Firstly, 9-year-compulsory tuition- free education was regulated since 1986. Favorable policies were continuously imposed in rural area for ensuring access to basic education. Also, in coping with the complex reality in rural areas, central government has financed and launched various kinds of programs to help rural people deal with the social change. Local community also actively initiated many programs to empower themselves.

Previous research about rural education, for example, studies done by McClymont (1975), Khan (2006) and a series of study on higher education for rural development and poverty alleviation by IIEP have focus on the influence of formal system for rural people. Research conducted by Reinhold (1993), Amedzro (2005), etc. mainly concerned with single innovation or program, little study explores the overall situation of non-formal education. This study, by analyzing the national context of China at macro level and in-depth through a comparative study of two cases, aims to investigate the role of non-formal education in the process of rural development and how tailor-made non-formal programs planned were implemented in order to meet different learning needs.

1.2. Aims and Objectives

The overall aims of the research are to investigate the role of non-formal education in the changing process of rural development, and to study how to make education and training programs work in diverse local contexts. To be more specific, the objectives are:

1) to provide a holistic picture of the rural development process in contemporary China,
2) to identify the role of education in the rural development process through analyzing national context and via a comparative case study of two non-formal training programs,
3) to compare the differences and similarities of these two programs and to find out how non-formal education programs are planned and implemented in order to fit the local context.
1.3. **Significance of the Study**

This study is an attempt to provide some insights to the complicated issue of education for rural development. It firstly contributes to a general body of knowledge on non-formal education in rural areas. Secondly, it furnishes some thoughts of different forms and different models of training outside the formal system; and detailed information about how non-formal training programs are planned and implemented. Thirdly, as rural development is a very important issue in developing countries, the study is a useful and needed contribution for policy making. The findings can be used to policy-making and extended to other provinces where ethnic diversity is high and where the situation of poverty is severe. Finally, it will also shed some light on further related investigations, as China with its complexity, makes an interesting research subject.

1.4. **Limitations of the study**

Major concerns of secondary data are the applicability and availability of the original one. The related dataset may not contain all the information that is needed particularly for this research. For this study, some valuable data like opinions and attitudes of the trainees, interaction between educational institutions and training recipients were not available, which could be seen as limitation and needs further investigation.

1.5. **Structure of the Study**

The thesis is organised into seven chapters. The introductory chapter outlines the overall structure of the study, including aims and objectives of the study. The second chapter introduces key concepts, discourses, and findings derived from the extensive of literature. The third chapter explains the research method of the study. The fourth chapter presents the situation in contemporary China, and includes the educational system, rural context etc. The fifth chapter presents a comparison of two cases and analysis of the result. This is followed by the sixth chapter that is discussion. The final chapter presents summary of the research, concluding remarks and recommendation for future research.
Key concepts

2.1. Role of Education

2.1.1 The Concept of Education

In most modern societies, education is considered a key instrument of social purpose. On the one hand, education is expected to maintain traditions; on the other hand, it is expected to promote political, economic, and social development.

Educational institutions are generally considered to be highly conservative because one of the primary effects of formal educational systems is cultural reproduction. This process of socialization is conservative in that it preserves current cultural patterns and discourages deviation from them (Parelius, 1987). The concept of education as an agent of cultural reproduction is less directly explained by the material and a subject, but rather more so through what is known as the “Hidden curriculum”¹. Through this socialization process, one acquires the ‘appropriate attitudes and values’ needed to further succeed within education and society. Via transmission of knowledge, values, attitudes, perceptions, and behavior patterns from one generation to the next, mainstream culture is legitimated and perpetuated. One of the pioneer scholars on cultural reproduction, Bourdieu argued that the education system was used solely to ‘reproduce’ the culture of the dominant class in order for the dominant class to continue to be in power. According to Bourdieu, inequalities are recycled through the education system and other social institutions (Bourdieu, 1977). Only those members of the dominant culture can acquire knowledge in relation to the way it is taught within this cultural system. Therefore, those who are not members of the dominant culture are at a disadvantage in receiving cultural information, and therefore will remain at a disadvantage.

There is no clear consensus as the exact role of education within cultural reproduction. But it's believed that the primary means in which education determines an individual’s social status, class, values, and hierarchy, is through the distribution of cultural capital. Instead of viewing culture as a source of shared norms and values, Bourdieu asserted that cultural “habits and dispositions” comprise a resource capable of generating “profits”; and, under appropriate conditions, they can be transmitted from one generation to the next (Lareau & Weininger 2003). The degree to which an individual attains cultural capital, determines the individual’s access to resources and opportunities (Lynch, 1990). In order to acquire cultural capital one must undergo indiscernible learning. Since cultural capital is one of the influential factors that determine educational achievement, one who successfully completes the process of educational attainment has a significant comparative advantage over a similar individual who does not. With this harsh divide between individuals who do and do not

¹ The “hidden curriculum” is a term to used to describe the unwritten social rules and expectations of behavior that we all seem to know, but were never taught (Bieber, 1994).
complete the process of formal education, social stratification and inequality between the two groups emerges. This further confirms cultural norms and reproduces the same system upon each successive generation. Although everyone may have an equal opportunity to be enrolled, it is only meritocratic in relation to a pupil’s ability to fit-in with the dominant cultural values perpetuated through the school system (Butler and Robson, 2008). Also, there is another role of education in its conservative characteristic which is social control. That is to say, individuals who internalize society’s values will be self-policing and supportive of the social order.

Although education often functions to stabilize and maintain the status quo, it can also promote social change and development in a number of ways. At least, schools modify the content of their curricula so that they reflect new scientific and technological advances. Changing norms and beliefs might also be incorporated so that each succeeding generation learns something new accordingly. In addition, education can promote the critical analysis of traditional institutions. Education institutions, especially colleges and universities, are expected to be centers of research and development. The newest ideas often come from educational institutions, especially from higher education. For instance, during periods of rapid industrialization and modernization, education has been used to teach new values, such as achievement, competition, and instrumental activism, and new habits, such as saving and punctuality, in order to facilitate economic development (Parelius, 1987). Some argue that expansion of education can help to reduce social inequalities and contribute to greater social mobility. As in modern societies, education qualifications have become an increasingly important factor in the labor market and also in determining social class position of people (Iannelli & Paterson, 2005). Therefore, education can both modify and transform traditional socioeconomic hierarchies.

As mentioned above, the link between educational credentials and occupational placement highlights another function of education, which is selection and allocation of individuals for various positions in society. As stated by Hirsch (2000), education is in its economical function the filter and factory. This point of view is also supported by consensus and conflict theorists. They agree that a primary function of educational institutions is to prepare youth for productive employment. This involves developing not only technical skills but also moral values and attitudes. There is a broad correspondence between the needs of the economic sector for particular types of workers and the training provided by the schools. However, it is important to note that economic development is a dynamic process. At one stage of development, a large number of relatively unskilled labor force would be most useful; at another stage, a highly differentiated and technologically sophisticated workforce would be more appropriate (Parelius, 1987). If educational institutions are to supply a continuous stream of suitable workers to facilitate economic development, those educational institutions will also have to change and be more responsive to learning needs.

Education has a fundamental role to play in personal and social development. Following Kant’s philosophy, the ultimate goal of education is to reach the perfection of each individual which he is capable of. The perfection here refers to the harmonious development of all the human faculties. To
realize and carry all the capacities that are in us to the highest point (Richard, 1985). But as Durkheim (1956) pointed out, this well-rounded development is not wholly attainable; for it is contradicted by another rule of human behavior which has us concentrate on a specific, limited task. According to our aptitudes, under a certain common base, we have different functions to fulfill, and we must adapt ourselves to what we must do. Thus, we can see that what education should provide is a certain common base of knowledge, values as well as to realize the potential of each individual to function well in society.

2.1.2 Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory is the most influential economic theory of Western education, setting the framework of government policies since the early 1960s. Human capital refers the skills, knowledge, competencies and attributes as physical, emotional and mental health of a person that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being (OECD, 2001). Schultz is one of the pioneers in finalizing the concept of human capital. In the 1960s, Schultz wrote that investment in education and skill formation was as significant a factor in economic growth as an investment in physical capital. He saw that the quality of the workforce was a variable element in the economy and could be improved to increase the human variable in the economic equation, and therefore increase productivity. Schultz’s research on human capital sought to clarify the investment process and the incentives to invest in human capital. He studied mainly formal education and organized research. Schultz investigated the impact of one’s investment in education and training on the potential for productivity in an economic system – the impact of human capital (Schultz, 1961). In 1964, Gary S. Becker advanced the Theory of Human Capital in his book “Human Capital” (1975). Through his analysis of census data, he provided empirical data of “rate of return”, demonstrating that an investment in training and education to increase one’s human capital was as important and measurable as an investment in other forms of capital. The stock of one’s human capital helps determine many aspects of a person’s life, most notably in the form of individual economic success and achievement. Investment in knowledge, skills and health would not only benefit the individual, but also increase human capital of the whole labor force of a country and improve potential productivity. Investment in human capital can take many forms. Schooling is the largest investment in human capital (Carnoy, 1995).

The development of human capital theory was committed to a consistent application of the neoclassical economy as a methodological basis for the understanding of human behavior. Its principles were applied on the effectiveness of inputs into education. Efforts to promote investment in human capital were seen to result in rapid economic growth for society (Olaniyang & Okemakinde, 2008). According to Fagerlind and Saha (1997), human capital theory provides a basic justification for large public expenditure on education both in developing and developed nations. The theory also is consistent with the ideologies of democracy and liberal found in most Western societies. The rationality behind investment in human capital is based on three arguments according to Babalola (2003):
i. that the new generation must be given the appropriate parts of the knowledge which has already been accumulated by previous generations;

ii. that new generation should be taught how existing knowledge should be used to develop new products, to introduce new processes, production methods and social services; and

iii. that people must be encouraged to develop entirely new ideas, products, processes and methods through creative approaches.

Although, human capital theory was well accepted and spread, the applicability of the theory, however, has been thrown into doubt since 1970s. As school enrolment rates have continued to increase while average incomes have stagnated, unemployment rates have worsened and underemployment of highly schooled people has been recognized as a social problem. Livingstone (1997) pointed out that human capital theory tends to equate workers’ knowledge levels with their levels of formal schooling, to rely only on quantitative indices of amount of schooling in estimating individual economic returns to learning and to infer that more schooling would lead to higher productivity and macroeconomic growth. Thus, some argue that human capital theory needs to be retooled. There have been at least three sorts of retooling efforts. First, some human capital advocates have suggested that the quality of education is now the problem and that by raising standards, starting earlier or providing more relevant or specialized forms, both human capital creation and economic growth can be rejuvenated. Second, some revisionist approaches no longer focus on formal schooling but on lifelong job-related learning. Third, some still adhere to the original conceptual approach and attempt to defend the theory by focusing more narrowly on documenting the continuing relative economic benefits (i.e., lower unemployment rates, higher earnings if employed) to those with higher formal credentials, as well as asserting the more intangible spin-off benefits of schooling (Becker, 1993).

Full development of human resources is essential in order to increase productivity and maintain an edge in competition with other nations of the world.

2.1.3 Education and National Development

The social and economic development of nations is fundamentally an education process in which people learn to create new institutions, utilize new technologies, cope with their environment, and alter their patterns of behavior. Education in a broad sense improves the capabilities of individuals and the capacity of institutions, and becomes a catalyst for the closely interrelated economic, social, cultural, and demographic changes that become defined as national development. Precisely how these changes occur is not fully known, and this problem often frustrates attempts at national policy making and planning. However, there is substantial evidence that schooling and other forms of education can, in a supporting environment, make major contributions to the complex processes of technology transfer, economic productivity, individual earnings, reduction of poverty, development of healthy
families, creation and sharing of values, learning the responsibilities of citizenship, and enhancement of the quality of life (Adam, 2002).

In advanced societies, science and education are the main developmental factors. This is because education essentially stipulates the quality of human capital, on which the successful use of available natural resources and monetary capital of a country depends. The human capital model of development emphasizes the importance of human capital investment in the process of economic and social development. This model shifts the emphasis from physical capital formation to human capital formation and from industrial development to rural development, as a basis for overall development (Singh, 2009). While those labor-surplus developing countries like China and Indian can transfer the large population from burden to resources. Human resource development through nutrition, health care, appropriate education, training and empowerment deserves the highest priority now in terms of allocation of resources for the purpose of national development.

As Becker (2006) mentioned, this is the ‘age of human capital’ in the sense that human capital is by far the most important form of capital in modern economies. The economic success of individuals, and the whole economies, depends on how extensively and effectively people invest in themselves. That is to say, in order to achieve economic growth and social development in this knowledge-driven society, it is critical to improve the quality of a nation’s workforce. When it comes to the quality of a workforce, there are two factors involved. One is labor productivity which refers to the value of the goods and services produced by a worker. The second is the flexibility of the labor force, or the ability of workers to move across sectors of the economy and between industries as the structure of the economy changes. The higher a country’s labor productivity and the more flexible its workforce, the better able that country is to acquire and adapt the technology needed to produce better quality goods and services at lower cost and to shift the structure of production to new markets and products (World Bank, 1993). Thus, to come back to human capital theory, countries need to invest more on education and training so as to improve the quality of workforce if they are to compete successfully in an era of rapid economic and technological change.

Most economists agree that it is human resources of a nation, not its capital nor its material resources that ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic and social development. As Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997) asserts:

“Human resources constitute the ultimate basis of wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization, and carry forward national development” (p. 102).
2.2. The Changing Process of Rural Development

More than half of the world’s population, and more than 70 percent of the world’s poor are to be found in rural areas where hunger, literacy and low school achievement are common (FAO & UNESCO, 2002). Rural people have often been referred to as a “neglected majority” in development processes. Sustainable development cannot be achieved unless rural people are fully engaged in the design and implementation of programs aimed at improving rural livelihoods. Until the needs of rural people are fully addressed, this sector will continue to be a drag on any national and international efforts to reduce poverty and to alleviate hunger.

Before discussing rural issues further, it seems important to define the term ‘rural’ itself. Different countries may have different perceptions of what ‘rural’ is. According to the FAO, the definition of a ‘rural area’ should meet two criteria: one related to place of residence and land settlement pattern, and the other related to the type of work that residents engage in. Firstly, rural areas are generally open areas, with low settled population densities. A high proportion of the unsettled land is for primary production (mining, agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishery). Secondly, the residents of rural areas are largely dependent – either directly or indirectly – on these primary production activities as their principal source of livelihood. Nevertheless, coming up with a uniform definition of the term ‘rural area’, that all countries can agree on has proved difficult, since what is ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ may already be politically and administratively defined. Hence, from a statistical perspective, the definition of the rural space varies very much according to countries (FAO & IIEP, 2003).

When tackling the issue of rural development, one has to bear in mind that the term connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept, and encompasses the development of agriculture and village and above all, the human resources in rural areas. As Singh (2009) stated, rural development can be conceptualized as a process, a phenomenon, a strategy and a discipline. As a process, it indicates the engagement of individuals, communities and nations in pursuing their cherished goals over time. As a phenomenon, rural development is the result of interactions among various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and social well-being of the rural people. As a discipline, it is multidisciplinary in nature overlapping agricultural, social, behavioral, engineering and management sciences. In short, rural development encompasses agriculture, education, infrastructure, and health, capacity-building for other than on-farm employment, rural institutions and the needs of vulnerable groups. Rural development aims at improving rural people’s livelihoods in an equitable and sustainable manner, both socially and environmentally, through better access to assets (natural, physical, human, technological, and social capital), and services, and control over productive capital (in its financial or economic and political forms), that enable them to improve their livelihoods on a sustainable and equitable basis (FAO & IIEP, 2003).
Generally speaking, development process implies desirable change. It is difficult to come to a universally acceptable definition of development, since what is desirable at a particular time, place and culture may not be desirable at other times of the same place and the same cultural settings. As Karanam and Panigrabi (2010) argued, the concept of development remained largely the result of the political will of the power structure, to initiate designed changes.

Schultz (1973) once provided two highly simplified economic models: one treats an economy in long run equilibrium, and the other treats an economy that is dynamic for reasons that it is in the process of modernization and it, therefore, is not in a state of equilibrium. Applying this to the rural context, four different types can be classified according to the ‘state of the agricultural economy’, namely: (1) traditional agriculture, (2) modernizing, but poor, (3) rich and continuing to modernize, and (4) rich with the modernization of agriculture completed. What types (1) and (4) have in common in terms of economic theory is that production and consumption activities are at a long run equilibrium. Although the difference between them in family income is very large, both (1) and (4) are here treated as stationary economic states. Types (2) and (3) however, are dynamic processes that have not arrived at long run equilibrium. We can see that developing countries belong to type (2) and are in the state of un-equilibrium. Empirical evidence has shown that rural areas in developing countries are experiencing dramatic changes brought by modernization. Growing urbanization, as reflected in the increasing proportion of the urban population or reclassification of rural places, is one of the consequences of the development process in rural areas. Urbanization is result from growing concentration of infrastructure and capital intensive industrial enterprises in urban center. This type of concentration has resulted in the existence of what is known as ‘dualism’ -coexistence of two separate economic subsystems in an economy. On the one hand, there exists a small but highly modern and developed urban subsector in the economy, which absorbs most of the material, financial, and educated and talented manpower resources. On the other hand, there is a very large but traditional and underdeveloped rural subsector, characterized by widespread poverty, unemployment and low productivity, which forms the majority of the population (Singh, 2009). Furthermore, expanding on the notion of a two-sector, “dual economy”, Chenery and Syrquin (1975) showed that as a country grows, the share of GDP derived from the agricultural sector shrinks, while GDP from capital-intensive industries expands. For macro level, the overall economy of a country develops and shifts from agriculture to manufacturing and services, while for micro level, rural households’ participation in farm activities declines while participation in non-agricultural activities intensifies (Winter et al, 2008). These changes imply change of needs in labor market and so require re-consideration of education and training provided for rural people.

In many developing countries, where dual-economy exists, rural development is a prerequisite for balanced overall development. Mosher (1966) listed five essentials for agricultural advancement: 1) transportation facilities, 2) a dependable marketing system, 3) a flow of new production techniques
from research, 4) supplies of production factors at suitable prices, and 5) economic incentives for increasing production. He also specifies three ‘accelerators’: 1) educational programs at several levels, 2) suitable credit facilities, and 3) farmers’ associations of various kinds. Research generates opportunities for an agricultural transformation and at the same time it both draws upon educational resources for the research itself and increases the potential pay-off from education. Technology is another crucial essential of the development equation, and the rate of technological change is dependent on the availability of properly educated workers (Anderson, 1973). Hence, in order to foster development in agriculture industry, to villages and to fully utilize human resources in rural areas, education has a key role to play in the development process.

### 2.3. Rural Education

More and more, the basic problems of rural areas as well as their solution seem to be essentially human. Indeed, the human resources of the rural areas are seen as their greatest potential asset. Education which supposed to bring out the potential of an individual is one of the key elements for the service of rural development. Education and training in the context of rural development needs to be linked to a vigorous and effective policy for the development of agriculture, rural crafts, and local industries. As commented by David Atchoarena (2003), Senior Program Specialist at the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), “Education for rural people lies at the heart of rural development and this is fundamental for reducing poverty worldwide.” (p.234). That education contributes to higher incomes is a well-established observation. While discourses on poverty articulated during the last decade, including the concept of “Human Development Index (HDI)”2 and capability deprivation have brought the role of education into wider focus not just in its instrumental role in alleviating poverty but also as a core constituent of development and human well-being (Khan, 2010). A review conducted for the World Bank examined 18 studies that measure the relationship between farmers’ education and their agricultural efficiency (as measured by crop production) in low-income countries. The review concluded that level of education of farmers was related to the level of their productivity, with 4 years of education contributing an 8.7 percent productivity gain over those with no formal education on average. The review also reveals that the effect of education is even greater (13 percent increase in productivity) where complementary inputs, such as fertilizer, new seeds or farm machinery, are available (Acker & Gasperini, 2003). As discussed above (see section 2.2), agricultural sector will shrinking and technology development, there would be much surplus labor force that has to enter into second or third industry. As households accumulate education, they tend to adjust their allocation of time to activities offering higher returns. Physically demanding, low

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2 Human Development Index is a composite statistic composed from data on life expectancy, education and per-capita GNI (as an indicator of standard of living). It has been used since 1990 by the United Nations Development Program for its annual Human Development Reports.
productivity, and low-paying agricultural work becomes less attractive as individuals use their elevated levels of human capital to gain entry into high-productivity, high-income occupations. If demand for skilled workers in the non-agricultural industries is not great, workers often take up part-time, high-productivity occupations or self-employment professions. This may involve migration into urban centers if the returns are high enough (Winter et al., 2008).

The discussion about education in rural areas is closely related to the broader rural development concept. In a thematic view, the 1960s could be seen as the ear of modernization, the 1970s as the period of state intervention, the 1980s as time of market liberalization and structural adjustment while the late 1990s stressed concepts and approaches such as empowerment and sustainable livelihoods in a broader context of poverty reduction strategy (Ellis and Biggs, 2001).

When it comes to education for rural people, there has been long debate in terms of its curriculum and organization. Should urban and rural schooling be different and to what extent urban and rural schools can be substantially diverging from each other is an issue that has been debated with a variable degree of intensity for well over a century. Some stressed the necessity of providing basic education for people in rural areas. Others argued that it is necessary to make learning in rural areas more relevant to real life. Even where it can be assumed that the rural areas are achieving some sort of parity in terms of the allocation of educational resources, the point can still be made that the kind of education provided is poorly adapted to rural needs. Of course, it is in one sense true that schools were initially an urban phenomenon and their curricula and activities reflect demands of the urban environment. In effect, the major target population for agricultural or rural education is not children but adults who are already more or less committed to an agricultural or rural future. Then, although it is reasonable to assume that formal schooling plays some role in rural and agricultural development, it is quite apparent that schooling alone is not likely to affect any major rural transformation. Cooperation between all levels of government and local agencies are highly important in the process of rural development (Wilson, 1973). In fact, as long as well planned and delivered, different forms of education all contribute to development of individual in meeting different learning needs. If rural development is to be achieved, all levels and forms of education should be fully utilized and well connected.

2.3.1 Education for All

Thinking about the contribution of education to development extends far beyond the school context. As early as the 1970s, the notion of ‘basic education’ was defined with respect to the minimum education needed to enable all individuals to assume their responsibilities as adults. This minimum level of education varies from one group of individuals to another and it refers to the acquisition of knowledge and know-how in complementary fields such as food, nutrition, hygiene, health, family planning, etc. By extension, perceptions of the relationships between education and rural development are broadened through the acquisition of knowledge and of functional capacities that are useful for family life and necessary for the improvement of living conditions (Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003).
Thirty years after the debates of the 1970s on the role of education in rural development, it is striking that the same questions are coming up again. Today, however, the international context is no longer the same. Over the last ten years or so, the global environment has been undergoing a radical transformation, with the expansion of the market economy and the growing interdependence of countries and policies in the context of globalization. In this new context, it seems necessary to re-examine the question of educational development through the new problems of rural development and food security. Naturally, this stance must be adopted first at the level of basic education (Acker & Gasperini, 2003).

The EFA movement was initiated at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990. Since then, governments, NGOs, and the media have taken up the cause of providing basic education for all children, youth and adults. In 1990, representatives from 155 countries and 150 organizations assured to provide education for all by the year 2000 at the World Conference on Education for All. The intention was that all children, youth and adults would benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. The decision to review progress a decade later was taken in Jomtien. Two important milestones intervened in 1996. The Mid-Decade Conference held in Amman Jordan, noted that considerable progress had been made. Its weak reporting underlined the need for an in-depth assessment. The report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for The Twenty-first Century promoted a holistic view of education consisting of four "pillars": learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together (UNESCO, 1996). The text was widely adopted. The Education for All decade culminated at the World Education Forum (26-28 April 2000, Dakar, Senegal) which adopted the Dakar Framework for Action Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments. This document commits governments to achieving quality basic education for all by 2015, with particular emphasis on girls’ schooling and a pledge from donor countries and institutions that "no country seriously committed to basic education will be thwarted in the achievement of this goal by lack of resources".

The Dakar Framework for Action draws on the results of the global EFA 2000 Assessment involving more than 180 countries. Launched in 1998, this global exercise was the most comprehensive study ever made of basic education. The assessment revealed a mixed situation. The number of children in school soared (from 599 million in 1990 to 681 million in 1998) and many countries were approaching full primary school enrolment for the first time. On the other hand, some 113 million children were out of school, discrimination against girls was widespread and nearly a billion adults – mostly women – were illiterate. The lack of qualified teachers and learning materials was the reality for too many schools. Disparities in quality were also widespread. Probably the most daunting challenge of all – in a world with 700 million people living in forty-two highly indebted countries – how to help education overcome poverty and give millions of children a chance to realize

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their full potential. The Dakar Framework for Action gives the international community an opportunity to redefine education strategies to cope with the legacy of the 1990s and to help learning keep up with the pace of change (FAO&UNESCO, 2002). The challenge of education to serve rural development is one of the main themes of the Education for All effort.

2.3.2 Beyond EFA: Non-formal Education

As pointed out by EFA assessment report, over-conservative systems were out of touch with young people’s needs. Rural people and rural areas are not homogeneous, and so for education to be relevant, it needs to respond to the diversity of rural situations. It is clear that the centralized planning apparatus in most countries simply cannot develop effective programs for diverse rural population. Therefore, rural communities will be increasingly responsible for shaping some of their own educational program and will be allowed to play a greater role in helping to make these decisions that are vital to their future (Foster & Sheffield, 1973). Such flexible strategies involving the decentralization of planning procedures and the devolution of responsibilities to more locally based agencies. Most governments are committed to policies that would facilitate rural development but they are, at the same time, committed to the notion that economic and social differentials between regions should be minimized. These considerations based upon notions of social equity frequently turn out to be the most powerful determinants of educational policies in the new states, how to possibly eliminate disparities among rural areas and implementing flexible development programs would be a tough problem in the whole development process of a nation (Wilson, 1973). Educational activities have to be linked to the specific needs of the rural community for skills and capacities to seize economic opportunities, improve livelihood and enhance the quality of life. A multi-sectoral educational approach involving all ages and formal, non-formal and informal education is necessary.

NFE is a term that is often used with terms such as community education, adult education, lifelong education and second chance education. Non-formal education is defined as any organized and systematic educational activity situated outside of the traditional education system and aimed at providing certain types of education to specific population groups, adults as well as children. One of the objectives of non-formal education is to expand the learning opportunities of children not enrolled in the traditional school system and to meet the needs of the population more effectively. Thus, previously, non-formal education has subject to criticism, in which relating to its marginal status with respect to the formal education system and to its low social status. For example, most children enrolled in non-formal schools have no possibility of returning to the formal school system. In addition, the non-formal curriculum generally does not lead to a diploma that affords access to the labor market. For these reasons, in many cases people turn to non-formal education not as a result of a real choice but owing to the impossibility of gaining access to the education system (Evans, 1981). This phenomenon may have reinforced the notion that non-formal education is ‘secondrate education’ attended only by

the most disadvantaged groups, whose future prospects remain limited. Whereas, the concept of NFE requires be re-considerate. As in rural education, the multiplicity of forms and the flexibility of non-formal education are major assets that promote the adaptation of programs to various rural contexts. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programs to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life skills, work skills, and general culture activities. Non-formal education programs do not necessarily follow the ladder system, and may be of differing duration (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2009). Non-formal education projects are characterized by great diversity, in terms of teaching methods, the subjects taught financing, objectives, target population and the qualifications of teaching staff. Although definition varies, there are some common features which characterize NFE: 1) NFE takes place outside the formal school system; 2) Programs are offered to adults, many programs also focus on early school leavers. Certain disadvantaged groups are often targeted through NFE, for example: ex-prisoners, disabled people and women; 3) NFE courses do not usually lead to formal qualifications; 4) The subject matter taught is usually geared to meet the specific needs of local communities and are typically oriented to practical skills and life skills that are immediately useful for the participants to improve their quality of life. Delivery of NFE is often community-based; 5) NFE is more flexible and responsive than formal education; 6) Teaching methods tend to be participatory and learner-centered, rather than teacher-centered; 7) There is a great variety in NFE programs, from well-established institutions that run accredited courses, to locally based operations that have little funding; 8) NFE is carried out by a wide range of government bodies, but it is the principal domain of NGOs; 9) NFE has a strong, but not exclusive, focus on the development of income generating activities and improvement of employability. There is also considerable emphasis on empowerment. Some NFE programs have an emphasis on character formation and spiritual aspects. Human rights education is also a focus of some NFE programs (Niue, 2001).

There is general recognition that NFE delivery systems servicing rural communities must be appropriate for the needs of the individuals and the communities as a whole. As with curriculum, delivery modes for NFE must be complementary to the needs of the rural communities being serviced. What is most appropriate for one country or one rural community may not be appropriate for another. The extent of physical infrastructure development, the availability of NFE facilities, the level of education achievement and the extent of social and economic development of a community, as well as the types of enterprises providing work opportunities, should all impact on the decision as to the most effective delivery model. In all cases it is crucial to take a team approach and to follow the principles of active community involvement, relevance and flexibility of the training program. Rural communities often can offer significant human, material and intellectual resources. Once these resources are mobilized and given adequate support and direction, rural communities and their members can become both beneficiaries and important actors in the provision of NFE and in the transformation of the rural space. Non-formal education is not only an alternative means to provide
education to children and youth unable to attend school, but also as part of providing youth and adults alike with lifelong education. It is becoming popular to include non-formal education as a component within assistance projects, especially in those for comprehensive rural development. In such non-formal education, the acquisition of literacy and numeracy as well as practical skills for making a living are centrally positioned (IIEP & FAO, 2003).

A typical feature of the farming population in many developed as well as developing countries is a belief that the only learning necessary in terms of farming techniques can be passed on from generation to generation. In other words, there is a lack of an education and training culture (UNESCO, 1997).

The issue of education and rural development is a recurrent theme. Throughout the world, a great many projects and studies have been conducted with a view to enable education to fully play its role in the agricultural and rural development of developing countries. Current trends in the world such as globalization of trade, rapid advancement of technologies, urbanization in developing nations and migration of labor force within and between countries have a significant impact on rural life. NFE has long been considered a crucial means of providing competent power of individual for socio-economic development in rural areas. Facing the above mentioned changes in today’s economic life, however, a serious question has been raised, i.e.: how to deliver NFE in an effective and efficient way in order to improve rural life and to facilitate the process of development (ibid.).
Methodology

3.1. Comparative case study

3.1.1 Case Study
Case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). In explaining what a case study is, Yin (2003) suggests that it is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. Case study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research (Yin, 1984). Case studies become particularly useful where one needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great-depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information. In order to understand and examine the processes of training activities, case study method was chosen. This method enables the research to go deeper into the complex real-life activities. Two programs are selected for the case study. One is a national-wide program called the Sunshine program which provides training for people migrating from rural to urban areas; the other one is one of the Community learning centers (CLCs) in Yunnan province. This study chooses Yunnan office of Sunshine program for the purpose of comparison. The same location of both cases confirms the same socio-economic and cultural background and makes the comparison feasible. Through comparison of differences and similarities of the two non-formal programs, the research question of the study would be better answered.

3.1.2 Rationale for Case Selection
Rationale for choosing these two programs is because in spite of the non-formal nature, these two programs are established under different ideology principles and executed by different models. “Sunshine” Program uses a top-down approach which is planned by central government and implemented by local offices under the guidelines. While the CLC can be seen as a bottom-up model that values and utilizes the power of community.

3.1.3 Analytical Framework
To identify the role of education in the rural development process, analytical framework was developed. For this study, analysis will be formed at macro and micro level. At macro level, economic status, educational situation and national policies will be analyzed. National context serves as broader ground for understanding the process of rural development, and then goes in depth to micro level where two cases will be presented and analyzed. Figure 3-1 depicts the logic model underlying the analytical framework.
3.2. Secondary analysis

The choice of which method to employ is dependent upon the nature of the research problem (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). In this study, secondary analysis will be utilized in order to comprehensively interpret the topic. This study tries to provide holistic pictures of socio-economic and education status of contemporary China and then goes in depth to two non-formal educational programs to investigate the role of education in the rural development process. Using secondary data is relatively inexpensive in comparison to collecting one’s own data and it is easy to acquire. Also the breadth is one outstanding advantage of secondary data. Secondary data can embrace a whole spectrum of empirical forms; they can include data generated through systematic reviews, through documentary analysis as well as the results from large-scale datasets such as the National Census or international surveys. Secondary data enables the research form extensive analysis on documentary, policies and go in-depth into cases study. Besides, secondary data is often generated by well resourced teams that have access to specialists, so it is of high quality and strong on external validity.

The data source in this research consists of two parts: the first part is reports which provide information about contemporary China, i.e. economic and social changes, rural transformation process, policies that promotes rural development, etc; the second part of the dataset is reports about two cases which are selected for this study. One is a national wide program called Sunshine Program which provides training for people migrating from rural to urban areas, the other one is one of the CLC. The data used in this study was originally collected for interpretation of the rural development process and to study education for rural people, etc. It basically falls in line with the purpose of this study which is to provide overall picture of contemporary China as macro background, and to investigate the role of non-formal education in the rural development process within this particular context. Whereas, this study went further by recoding and re-analyzing different sources of data and pull them together in order to answer the research question.
Macro context: Contemporary China

4.1. Demographic Profile

China, with a land area of 9.6 million square kilometers, is the world’s third-largest country by geographical extent. As of 2007, China had an estimated population of 1.3 billion – the largest in the world. Since the 1970s upon the adoption of the “one-child policy”, population growth in China has slowed down and remained low and is expected to average 0.42 percent per year to 2030. Of the total population, about 78 percent are of working age (15 years old and over); only 50 percent are in the young 15-44 working age group. China is a largely agricultural country with 900 million of living in rural areas. China is an ethnically plural country. The Chinese government has ascertained that there are 56 nationalities in China. Compared with the Han nationality, the remaining 55 nationalities are much smaller in population size, so they are habitually called “ethnic minorities”. The State promotes mutual learning and use of different languages among all nationalities (CACU & CAEA, 2008).

The decline in population growth has been accompanied with extraordinary economic growth and the rapid transformation of the economy in the last three decades. However, growth was mainly concentrated in the coastal provinces, and resulting in vast migration of workers from rural inland areas. The uneven economic development of rural and urban areas combined with a large pool of surplus labor has been the main driving force behind the world’s largest internal migration of rural residents to the cities in China. In 2005, there were an estimated 50 million inter-provincial migrants in China. China’s rural migrant labor force is generally young, with over 71% between the ages 15 and 29. The number of rural migrants seeking employment in the country’s urban centers has risen from just two million in the mid-1980s to 150 million today. In 2007, the shrinking agricultural sector and expanding of secondary and tertiary industries will generate 150-180 million surplus rural workers. That is to say, every year, six million new entrants are to find employment in urban areas. Based on a 1% annual growth rate in urbanization, China’s towns and cities will absorb about 300 million people from rural areas in the next 20 years (China Daily, 2009).

Accounting for an estimated 16% of national GDP growth over the last two decades, the significant economic contribution of internal labor migration is essential both to the labor sending and receiving provinces. It is difficult to gain an accurate occupational profile for all migrants due to their ‘irregular’ migration, presence in the informal economy and high job mobility. Nevertheless, studies have revealed that:

1) Migrants are mostly employed in construction (25%), manufacturing (24%), wholesale, retail and catering (20%) and increasingly in the service industry (18%).
2) Comprising 40% of the total urban labor force, rural migrant laborers account for 68% of the workforce in processing and manufacturing, nearly 80% in construction and over 52% in the restaurants and wholesale and retail outlets of the tertiary industry.

3) Approximately 52% of migrants are self-employed, compared to 12% of the local workforce; 29% of migrants work in non-public sectors and 12% are in public sectors, compared with 13% and 68% of the local workforce respectively (Tunon, 2006).

Of the total working population, 40.8% are employed in agriculture, 26.8% in industry and 32.4% in services (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2008). With China’s rapid economic development, the income of Chinese residents has risen steadily. In 2008, the gross national income per capita amounted to USD 2,770 (global country ranking 130 out of 210 countries) and purchasing power parity amounted to USD 6,020 (global country ranking 122 out of 210 countries) (Niez, 2010). Nonetheless, despite increase on income, total of 40.07 million people in rural areas still lived below the poverty line (approximately USD 75 per year) (NBSC, 2009).

### 4.2. Economic Status

Prior to 1979, China maintained a centrally planned economy. A large share of the country’s economic output was directed and controlled by the state, which set production goals, controlled prices, and allocated resources throughout most of the economy. Beginning in 1979, China launched several economic reforms. Transition to market economy includes establishment of four special economic zones for attracting foreign investment, boosting exports, and importing high technology products; and de-centralization of economic policymaking in several economic sectors, especially trade. Since the introduction of economic reforms, China’s economy has grown substantially faster than during the pre-reform period (see Table 4-1). Chinese statistics show real GDP from 1979 to 2002 growing at an average annual rate of 9.3%, making China one of the world’s fastest growing economies. The World Bank estimates that China’s economic reforms have raised nearly 200 million people out of extreme poverty.
Table 4-1  China’s Average Annual Real GDP Growth Rates: 1960-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Average Annual % Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960-1978(pre-reform)</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-2002(post-reform)</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Chinese government data

Several economists have concluded that improvement of productivity was another major factor in China’s rapid economic growth. This was largely result from reallocation of resources to more productive uses, especially in sectors that were formally heavily controlled by the central government, such as agriculture, trade, and services (Morrison, 2006).

Accompanied with GDP growth, the structure of the three industries also changes. The three industries refer to Primary Industries-Agriculture, Secondary Industries-Industry and Tertiary Industries, known as Services. According to Petty–Clark Law, the industrial structure of a country, in general, depends on its level of per capita income; as the per capita income of country increases, the relative size of primary industry tends to decline while that of secondary industry expands; furthermore, as per capita income rises to the high-income level, tertiary industry accounts for a large part of total industry. As we can see in Table 4-2, China’s industry structure has been experiencing considerable change since 1990s. Firstly, the strikingly high relative size of secondary industry should be noted. They account for nearly half of total output. Secondly, the relative size of secondary and tertiary industry has been on the rise while that of primary industry has been on the decline. However, contrast with its share of total output, which was below ten percent, the number of employees in the agriculture industry remains by far the largest, accounts for more than 40 percent of the country’s labor force in 2005(Sasaki & Ueyama,2009). This trend implies that as continuous shrinking of agriculture industry, more and more labor force will be released from this industry; and they have to find jobs in secondary and tertiary industries where certain education and training are needed for the transformation. Also the low productivity of agriculture industry calls for improvement.
### Table 4-2 Structural Shifts in the Three Industry Sectors in the 1990s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary (At Current Prices)</th>
<th>Secondary (At Current Prices)</th>
<th>Tertiary (At Current Prices)</th>
<th>Primary (At Constant Prices(At 1990 constant prices))</th>
<th>Secondary (At Constant Prices(At 1990 constant prices))</th>
<th>Tertiary (At Constant Prices(At 1990 constant prices))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annual Averages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991-1995</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1999</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled and computed from relevant figures from *China Statistical Yearbook, 1999; Statistical Committee on 1999 National Economic and Social Development*

### 4.3. Rural Context: then and now

#### 4.3.1 Production System Evolution

In the past 50 years, the rural production system has evolved in three phases: 1) firstly, in the early 1950s, the land was re-distributed by the government amongst rural workers. 2) Then, in the late 1950s, a collective sharing system, called the People’s Commune System came into existence. Under this system, productive resources and benefits were shared equally amongst commune members, regardless of differences in contributions. 3) At the third stage, in late 1970s, the Family Contract System replaced the People’s Commune System. Under the new system, rural people worked on a family basis again and with a single rent to the state in the form of a proportion of the generated product. Since the rural reform launched in early 1980s, China has implemented household responsibility system, liberalized agricultural product markets and prices, encouraged the development of operational systems and township enterprises. Market-oriented reform gives farmers great incentives. Consequently, agriculture and rural development obtain phenomenal achievements: Grain output surpassed several crucial levels consecutively, increasing from 300 billion Kg to 500 billion Kg; cotton output increased from 40 million Dan to 80 million Dan. China is now world’s largest producer of grain, cotton, oilseeds, vegetables, fruits, meats, eggs and fishery products. Farmers’ net per capita income has increased from RMB 133 in 1978 to RMB 3255 in 2005, growing more than 20 times (Cheng, 2006).

#### 4.3.2 Urbanization and the Urban-Rural Disparities

Some viewed urbanization as an indicator of development. Despite the trueness of this kind of opinion, urbanization as an inevitable process, to a large extent influences livelihood of rural people. According to official statistics the urban population share has increased from about 26% in 1990 to
28% in 1995 and further to 39% in 2002. Growth in China’s urban population is the result of natural increase in the urban population and reclassification of the rural population. Reclassification occurs in one of two ways: (a) when rural residents migrate to urban places, and (b) when rural places (and their resident populations) are reclassified as urban places (Sicular, Yue, Gustafsson, & Li, 2005). All of these mechanisms have contributed to China’s urban population growth, but migration appears to be the most important. Chan and Hu (2003) stated that in the 1990s, of total growth in the urban population, 55% was due to migration and 22% due to reclassification of rural places.

As discussed in the literature part, China is a typical developing country where dualism exists. Development in urban and rural areas is extremely uneven. Disparities between urban and rural areas are to be found in income, economic and social status, welfare system, education situation and so on. Despite rapid economic development and increase on GDP, about 50 million people are still living under the poverty line. The national Poverty Line, first presented 1986 in China, took the county as a unit of measurement. A county whose per capita GDP was less than 200 Yuan (RMB) was regarded as a poor county. A poor county could enjoy special financial support from central and provincial governments. However, the monetary value of the national poverty line has changed along with the country’s economic development. In 1986, the Government, for the first time, put forward a policy on poverty reduction to overcome poverty in rural areas. It is estimated that the poverty rate in rural areas in 1978 was about 30 per cent. The National Poverty Line, which was worked out for targeting the rural poverty population, is a criterion for working purposes; it is not a criterion for measuring the living standards of individual people though. According to the NBS, in 2006, average disposable income per urban inhabitant was 11,759 RMB; while that of a rural inhabitant was 3,587 RMB- the urban-rural income gap increased more than 85% during the past 20 years. As showed in Figure 4-1, urban-rural income gap is still widening. Some researchers attribute this phenomenon to relatively low productivity in rural areas (Cai, 1998), while Li (2003) suggests several other reasons: government control of the price of produce, high tax burdens on farmers, urban-biased economic policies and discrimination in social security.

**Figure 4-1 Widening Urban-Rural Income Gap**

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China
According to Simon Kuznets’ theory, disparity will initially increase with industrialization, then reach a peak and begin to decline. Kuznets’ theory posits that when the non-agricultural population of a state reaches 60 percent to 70 percent and the per capita GDP reaches US$1,000, income discrepancy will start to decrease (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2002). Ge (2008) used official statistics to examine the relationship between economic development and rural and urban inequality in China and found that the quicker the development, the higher the inequality. She concluded therefore that China was still on the ascending side of Kuznets’ curve. Although China’s GDP per capita has already reached the US$1,000, the rural population remains very large. Political economists argue that the government cannot simply rely on economic and demographic forces alone to narrow the urban-rural divide in the future. It needs to adopt specific administrative measures such as tax and social welfare reform, and further increase rural investment so that the proportions of completed rural and urban investment are brought into closer alignment. In an attempt to reduce this disparity, the Chinese government has sought over the last decade to accelerate the development of inland rural areas by reforming the agricultural tax system, subsidizing agricultural products and developing the rural economy. The government also launched new rural medical healthcare systems, pension schemes and other social welfare measures to improve social security in rural areas (China Labor Bulletin, 2009).

4.3.3 Policy for Rural Development

Starting with the reform period in 1978, China’s policy for rural areas has been evolving towards a more market-based approach, involving a release of agricultural controls and a less-centralized production system (OECD, 2009). A large part of China’s success in raising rural incomes originates from a series of reforms in agriculture in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Related reforms contributed to a greater diversification of economic activities and to a more autonomous rural governance system. The Government’s development strategy expressed in its 10th Five-Year Plan (2001-2005) identified as a national goal the achievement of a ‘Xiaokang’ (‘Moderate Prosperity’) society. This concept went beyond increases in income to stress the all-round social progress. Environmental sustainability and the application of modern science and technology to raise productivity and generate greater benefits were the cornerstones of the strategy. The increased flexibility of resource movements, a continued emphasis on human resource development, active measures to narrow social disparities - especially rural-urban and regional gaps, and better management of the rural urban transition were identified in subsequent policy statements as key areas of concentration. The Government stressed poverty reduction and sustainable development of its lagging western regions and the north-east as strategic priorities. For the rural sector, land holdings per household are very small and other resources are extremely scarce. The growing income disparity between cities and rural areas has increasingly become politically sensitive, reflecting growing discontent. On the other hand, the government recognizes that a successful development is a long modernization process that will depend on maintaining a healthy agriculture and rural economy, and that China’s rural economy must become an integral part of the nation’s push towards modernization. Meanwhile, a key government objective is to
reverse the trend of increasing inequalities and to further reduce poverty. Therefore, farmers’ income and overall well-being has been at the core of the policies.

In order to achieve ‘Xiaokang’, the Chinese government broadened the scope of rural policy with its most recent policy approach, “Building a New Socialist Countryside” (NSC). As a strategic guidance, the concept of building a “new socialist countryside” - incorporating investments in infrastructure, health, and education, social development and a grassroots democratization process - leads all tasks (Guo, Yu, Todd, Henehan, & Li, 2009). This rural development strategy pointed out that to achieve prosperity in rural China, agriculture, village and people in rural area should be considered as different dimensions of the same problem. A series of policies were articulated to support and benefit agriculture and farmers more directly and effectively. National infrastructure investments would be channeled to rural areas. Newly added financial appropriations on education, healthcare and culture would be used mainly in countryside. Newly added national infrastructure funds would be used mainly in rural areas. An increased proportion of income resulted from land sales would be used in building infrastructures in rural areas. The central government allocates a rural construction fund of about RMB 53 billion focusing on the improvement of rural living and production conditions. Expenditure on rural areas almost doubled in nominal terms between 2004 and 2007, with the largest part provided through agricultural policy measures (55% of the total in 2007), followed by rural infrastructure (23%), and social development, which combines support for rural education, health care, rural poverty-alleviation, and rural social security (20%) (OECD, 2009).

Besides, China started the trial reform of rural taxes and fees in 2000. The reform eliminated all farmer-specific taxes and fees except agricultural taxes and value-added agricultural taxes. All national farm taxes were removed this year, the over 2,600 year-old tax came to an end eventually. Compared to 1999, the year before the reform, farmers save RMB 125 billion from taxes exemption, with RMB 140 per capita. Meanwhile, governments of all levels have encouraged the development of non-state owned economies, speeded up the migration of rural labors to urban areas, improved the working conditions for rural labors in urban areas and guided the flow of rural migrants (Cheng, 2006). While in witnessing achievement and addressing new challenges, in the period of 12th Five-Year (2010-2015), industrialization, urbanization and agricultural modernization are perceived as one integrated and interacted process. Focus should be given to accelerate the transformation of agricultural, ensure national food security, promotion of income increase of farmers and improving comprehensive productivity, anti-risk capability and market competitiveness of rural products. This proposed strategy pursues not only economic growth, but comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development in political, cultural, social and ecological dimension (Han, 2010).
4.4. Education in China

4.4.1 General Background

Early in 1985, the Central Committee of the State circulated the “Decision of Reforming Education System”, in which the key point stipulated is that the ultimate aim of the reform on education system is to upgrade the population quality of the nation and foster more talented and gifted person. The education in China must serve the development of the socialist construction, which should depend on the education. To accomplish the grand task of socialist modernization, we should not only rely on the present talented personnel, but also foster a large quantity of qualified personnel among the young generation who would prepare to be professionals and skillful workers for the new century. This has been the grand task for the development of education course and the reform on educational system (Central Committee of the State, 1985).

In 2000, China realized the aim of basically popularizing nine-year compulsory education and basically eliminating illiteracy among young and middle-aged people. In 2007, the total number of counties having basically popularized nine-year compulsory education and basically eliminated illiteracy among young and middle-aged people reached 3022, accounting for 98.5% of the national total of counties, and the coverage of the target population reached 99%. The net enrollment rate of school-aged children for primary education reached 99.5%, the gross enrollment rate of junior secondary schools got to 98.0%, the gross enrollment of senior secondary schools went up to 66.0%, and the gross enrollment rate of universities and colleges increased to 23%. At present, the average education level of all citizens has grown to 8.5 years, and the educational level of the newly added laborers has been promoted to above 10 years (CACU & CAEA, 2008).

In China, the current regular schooling system consists of 3-year kindergarten (for 3-5 years old children); 9-year compulsory education (6-year primary education and 3-year junior secondary education in most provinces, or 5-year primary education and 4-year junior secondary education in a limited number of provinces); 3-year senior secondary education (regular senior secondary education or secondary vocational and technical education; higher education (4-year college education or 2-or-3-year specialized higher education and higher vocational education); and graduate education for master’s and doctoral degrees. The system of adult education in China includes primary education for adults (including literacy classes), secondary education for adults and higher education for adults as well as various kinds of distance education, correspondence education and spare-time education and short-term training classes. In those minority populated areas, the ethnic primary schools, secondary schools and colleges were established where students are taught in their native languages to satisfy their special language and cultural needs. Special classes are also offered to those ethnic minority students in the areas where citizens of Han nationality and minority nationalities live together. For clearly understanding of education system in China, we can see as follows:
Over the past few years, the Chinese government has been continuously increasing the fiscal expenditure for education. In 2007, by including the expenditure on rural compulsory education into the fiscal support mechanism, the Chinese government has implemented the new policy of waiving all 150 million rural pupils’ and students’ tuition and fees and costs for textbooks during the compulsory education period. In addition, living allowances are also offered to 7.8 million boarding students from poor families in rural areas. The Chinese government has allocated special funds for supporting the renovation of those dangerous classrooms of about 22,000 rural schools and for building more than 7,000 new boarding schools. So far, the distance education system has covered 360,000 rural primary and secondary schools, enabling all rural students to receive quality education. Moreover, the governments at all levels have made great efforts to develop vocational education. As a result, the national total number of students enrolled in secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools in 2007 reached 20 million and 8.61 million respectively. As to academic higher education, the total number of undergraduate students and graduate students in China in 2007 reached 11.44 million. Continuing efforts will be made to further optimize educational structure, promote the balanced development of compulsory education, accelerate the popularization of senior secondary education, and build a complete and balanced national education system.
education, expand vocational education, improve the quality of higher education and coordinate the harmonious development of various kinds of education. By taking educational equity as the basic educational policy in China, all citizens will be provided chance to receive education. Since the 1980s, China has adopted a series of educational laws and regulations such as the Chinese Education Law, the Chinese Compulsory Education Law, the Chinese Teachers Law, the Chinese Vocational Education Law, the Chinese Higher Education Law, the Chinese Civilian-run Education Promotion Law, Regulations on Literacy Education and Regulations on Education for Disabled People. All the educational laws and regulations provide an important basis for guaranteeing the healthy development of education. All the above efforts are aimed at further improving the modern national education system, developing the system of lifelong education and building a modernized socialist education system with Chinese characteristics (CACU & CAEA, 2008).

4.4.2 Rural Education in China

Government has stressed the active functions of rural education in the changing process of rural development. It was pointed out that education plays a vital role in technology dissemination, increasing employability of rural labor force, empowerment, etc. The importance and significance of rural education should be fully realized by governments at all levels and educational administrations.

EFA: In China, the government and the people’s congress are at central. The management of ‘Education for All’ at the central level mainly resides in the central educational department under the unified guidance of the State Council and in collaboration with other relevant departments, mainly governmental agencies in charge of planning, finance, capital construction, civil affairs, nationalities affairs, and NGOs. The responsibility and authority for universalizing compulsory education and eradicating illiteracy is delegated to local governments. The Compulsory Education Law regulated that parents and communities should create sound support to the education of children. Not sending compulsory school-age children to school is a punishable offence. By 2007, rural compulsory education has not needed the input from household any more. As a consequence, equalization of compulsory education between regions and rural and urban areas is being realized. For rural people in China, 93% were graduated from primary schools and 84% have completed secondary schools. As the popularization of 9-year- compulsory education, basic education for all has been accomplished in most areas of China. Unfinished EFA tasks are targeting remote rural western regions (Huang, 2008).

5 Source: report of the Fourth Session of the Tenth National People’s Congress (2006)
Beyond EFA: In China, non-formal education, as a remedy for formal schooling, used to be regarded in terms of anti-illiteracy campaign for youth and adults. Nowadays, it is also playing a greater role in improving people’s lives and promoting social development, particularly in poverty-stricken ethnic inhabitances (UNESCO, 2003). Increased rural vocational education is providing more favorable conditions for transferring rural surplus labor into urban non-agriculture sectors and promoting agricultural modernization. All levels of formal, non-formal and informal education are important for facilitating rural development. Through coordinating the development of basic education, adult education and vocational education in rural areas, the active function of education would be fully realized and contribute to rural modernization. It was planned that a national life-long learning system will be established by the year 2010 (CACU & CAEA, 2008). Adult education and community education should be practiced for the construction and accomplishment of a life-long education system in order to upgrade the quality of the whole nation. As there is no specialized administrative department for non-formal education at national level, most investment in non-formal education and informal education has come from governments at all levels, enterprises, working units, non-governmental organization and social associations- and even individuals as well (UNESCO, 2003). Non-formal education is one crucial component of rural education. There are various kinds of non-formal programs available for meeting diverse learning needs in rural areas. China is quite experienced in lunching non-formal programs, for instance, literacy campaigns in the 1980s, nationwide program approach for large-scale policy implementation: the ‘Sunshine Projects’, ‘Prospering Villages through Sciences and Education’ program, technical vocational education and training, community learning center, etc.

Although some progress have been made, rural disparities in the provision of access to educational opportunities and quality of education are still serious problems among the majority of their people living in rural China (Chinapah, 2010). According to a report provided by INRULED and UNESCO (1996), education in rural areas has not been in line with the drastic changes and increasing demands of socio-economic development and reforms are needed in many areas. Firstly, the average educational level and qualifications of the workforce in rural areas remain very low. In 1992, of the 457 million workers in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and side occupations in rural areas, 45.4% had only an elementary education. There were only 870,000 qualified workers working as technicians at district and township levels, whilst the actually needed number is at least one million. Even among the 870,000 counted as technicians, as many as 44.4% had only lower secondary education and 19.4% had an education below lower secondary. Only 11.4% had a secondary specialized education. Secondly, the educational structure is not corresponding with the economic structure. A strategic change in economic policy is to diversify economies in rural areas, optimize the allocation of resources, and pursue high production, high quality, and high efficiency not only in farming but in other industries oriented towards market needs. Agriculture is to be combined with industry and trade; production is to be integrated with processing and sales; and individual households are to be connected
to the domestic and international markets. Yet the focus has remained on academic high schools in many areas, and vocational and technical education and adult education has remained the weak link. Few educational institutions are seriously engaged in the training of technical manpower for modern farming and for small industries in rural areas. A structural change is therefore needed in rural education to serve the multi-dimensional needs of socio-economic development especially at community level. Thirdly, due to old, out-of-date educational values, many rural schools have remained academically exam-oriented and only value high enrolment rate of higher education. Much of what is taught at rural schools is not relevant to the rural setting and local community development needs. The curriculum and the teaching methodologies are much divorced from production and daily life, without elective courses to cater for local needs and individual interests. Finally, appropriate agro-technologies and technical know-how are not widely applied, and extension programs are not developed.
Case study

5.1 Profile of Yunnan Province

From figure 5-1, we can see that Yunnan province is located on the southern border of southwest China. It covers an area of 394,000 square kilometers with a population of around 43.3 million (51.7% Male, 48.3% Female). Kunming is the capital city of Yunnan province.

![Figure 5-1 Map of China](http://www.yn.gov.cn/yunnan,china/72057594037927936/index.html)

Yunnan has the highest number of ethnic groups among all provinces and autonomous regions in China. 25 minority groups account for 1/3 of the population. Meanwhile, it is also one of the poorest provinces of the country, behind only Tibet and Guizhou. In 2002, per capita GDP of Yunnan is US $627, and rural per capita income is US $195. Of the total population, 74% live in rural areas. 33% of rural people live below the national poverty line (around 0.31 US $ per day). Yunnan’s

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economic pillars include the industries of tobacco, biology, minerals and tourism. It is mainly an agriculture-based province.

As one of the poorest province with high level of ethnic diversity, Yunnan has attracted a lot of foreign aid in establishing development projects, such as UNDP in western region of China. While in the national development plan, it is also a targeted province. As indicated in the 11th Five Year Plan of National Economy and Social Development (2006-2010), the government continues the policy of promoting development of western region and enhancing the northeast industrial base, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of the regions to achieve equities in public services and to attain a more equitable society (UNDP China, 2008).

As an extremely poor and agriculture-based province, rural development is vital for Yunnan province. The rationale for selecting Yunnan province also lies in the high ethnic diversity which implies highly diverse learning needs. Besides, as a target province in development framework, there is abundant information for secondary analysis. As pointed out by UNDP China (2008), there are many reasons why the development in the Southwest Region is lagging, but the primary reasons, are the relative backwardness of capacities, development and management of human resources and a lack of understanding of the role of government. Development in Yunnan largely depend on to what extend the human resources are cultivated through education and training. As for the education status, basic education has spread to most of population. Adult literacy is 85%. Primary school enrolment rate is 99.6% (equal m/f ratio) and 87.5% for junior secondary school (junior) enrolment7. Besides universal 9-year-comporsory education, various kinds of non-formal programs flourish in the area so as to increase income and empower the marginalized rural poor and ethnic minorities. the comparison between a top-down technical vocational training program and a bottom-up mode of CLC is intended to investigate how education programs are planned and implemented to meet diverse learning needs of rural people.

5.2. Case A: Sunshine Program in Yunnan8

5.2.1 Background
At present, the overall quality of China's rural labor force is comparatively low. And because of lacking necessary knowledge and skills, it is difficult for rural migrants to achieve stable employment in non-agriculture industries in urban area. Thus, it is essential to carry out rural labor force training programs as to improve the employability of migrants and also to raise the competitiveness of the industries. Sunshine program is a technical and vocational training program launched by central government. Its aim is to help rural people to get employed in non-agricultural industries in urban areas through proper training. It is a national-wide pilot program which operates under cooperation of

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7 Source: Yunnan Provincial Statistics Bureau, Census 2000.

5.2.2 Content of Sunshine Program

In Sunshine program, administration structure is divided into two levels. The national office is responsible for policy-making, coordination and supervision of the whole program. At local level, where actual training takes place, local offices implement the program according to local contexts. The local office selects a training provider in an open, fair and impartial manner in the form of open tender. Then the training institutions develop and organize training programs as well as furnish employment services in response to local labor market needs. Sunshine program mainly focuses on short-time vocational skill training which lasts from 15 to 90 days. And the most common training subjects are skills required by catering, hotels, health care, construction and manufacturing industries, etc.

Implementation: The national office, by judging funding, labor force and employment situations of different provinces, determines the training task - the number of rural people that need to be trained during a period of time. Then, local offices take the responsibilities of planning and implementing a specific program in order to meet the assignment. Through public bidding, training institutions are chosen. According to the “Provisions of Management of Sunshine Program (For Trial Implementation)”, the training institutions have to fulfill the following conditions to be legitimate: 1) an independent legal representative and qualification for vocational education and training; 2) qualified infrastructures and teaching staffs for required training; 3) has well-established contact with labor market as to facilitate employment of trainees; 4) familiar with education and training for rural people and has good outcomes from previous training; 5) geographically close to the targeted training population. The training unit has to provide detailed report about the specific program in terms of training subject, time duration, number of trainees, employment possibilities and tuition fees to local office to be approved. Once the application has been accepted, it will be reported to the national office. The local office is also requested to provide quarterly progress report of the program to the national office for quality control. We can see the operational process of Sunshine program more clearly in Figure 5-2:
Figure 5-2 Operational Process of Sunshine Program

It is a typical top-down model where planning, implementation and supervision of the program are strictly controlled by national office. Trainees’ voices cannot be heard and they have no chance of participating but accept the training program. But, as Sunshine program is carried out by central government, its breadth spreads to the whole country. And the mission is imperative to local government which expands access of learning opportunities to rural people.
**Funding:** In Sunshine program, the expense of training is shared by government and the individual trainee. Government funds come from the central government budget and ear-marked local financial support. Government subsidizes training institutions to reduce the training fees. But, according to investigation by national office, the average cost for training is around 602 Yuan (RMB), while subsidy granted by government is only 254 in 2007 which means trainees still have to pay considerable amount of money. This may be a problem for the most disadvantage group to access to training when needed.

**Quality control and supervision:** when it comes to supervision of Sunshine program, there are two key points of concern. One is quality and outcomes of training. The other one is the use of government funding. Supervision focuses on the use of project funds to ensure financial support directly benefits trainees. The training institution bears the responsibility of the use of funding. And the legal representative will be inspected by local and central government, unauthorized changes in the use of funds, misuse will be strictly punished. For ensuring quality education and training, local offices are requested to hand in quarterly progress report to national office, and randomly some programs will be checked by national office.

**Outcomes:** as the goal of Sunshine program is to provide vocational training for rural migrants, data about outcomes are mainly about the quantity of trainees. Take the year 2008 for example, the result of the program are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yunnan Province</th>
<th>Number of students who complete the training program</th>
<th>Number of students who get employment in non-agriculture industries</th>
<th>Completion of the training mission (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan.-Jun.</td>
<td>21000</td>
<td>18000</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul.</td>
<td>29347</td>
<td>27590</td>
<td>32.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>37421</td>
<td>34851</td>
<td>41.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>53433</td>
<td>49675</td>
<td>59.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>67499</td>
<td>63032</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>84984</td>
<td>78744</td>
<td>94.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can see, the number of training increases from month to month, and more and more trainees get employed after completion of the program. However, due to lack of data (there is only one year of intact data of outcomes), it is fair to say that Sunshine program contributes to cultivating human resources and raising employability of rural people. However, to what extend and scope education helps in the changing process is not so clear.
5.3. Case B: Community Learning Center in Yunnan

5.3.1 Background
Community Learning Center refers to the local educational institution outside the formal education system. It is usually set up and managed by local people to provide various learning opportunities for community development and improvement of people quality of life in rural and urban areas (UNESCO, 1995). This training model emphasizes active participation of training recipients. They usually have the chance to be involved in the planning and amendment process of the training program. Under the principle of empowerment from the grassroots level, and with its easy access and flexibility in training content and delivering method, CLC becomes more and more influential in the time of lifelong learning. In order to explore a way that fully utilizes the power of schools and local community as to promote socio-economic development and empowering rural people, a CLC is an exploratory program was found in 2001 in Liushao County and Lianhe County (both are minority group residence) of Yunnan province. Through seven years of practice and investigation, the CLC which composes of four pillars in structure, namely, a training center, a library, a development center and a cultural activity center is well functioning. The idea of participatory- learning and closer links between schools, community and society seem to resulting in a clear comprehensive benefits and positive social response.

5.3.2 Content of the CLC

Implementation: The CLC is designed by a research group of Yunnan Normal University. According to education and social situation of Liushao County and Lianhe County, a specified local model was adopted. School is the core operator, local government provides support and higher education institutions provide research guidance in organizing different training activities. The CLC was directly established by local primary schools and community committees, aiming at fulfill learning needs of teachers, students, parents and villagers of the county. In this unique case, four different pillars- a training center, a library, a development center and a cultural activity center constitute the CLC. The four parts on one hand has comparatively different and independent functions; on the other hand, however, serve a shared goal, which is to improve overall quality of human resource, facilitate economic growth as well as preserve and promote minority cultural heritage in the area. The training center provides three kinds of training: firstly, training for rural teachers; secondly, training for the whole community member (includes literacy, numeracy, basic knowledge and etc.); and finally, training and promoting modern agro-technologies. The library was found in 2005 in order to enrich knowledge and spiritual world of local people. The development center which serves as a platform, not only offers opportunity for trainees to apply knowledge learnt from the CLC in practice, but also

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generates incomes during study-work activities. New and advanced agro-technologies are also demonstrated and promoted by the development center. The cultural activity center of the CLC is a unique unit compares to other CLCs. As located in minority group residence, preserves and promotes culture of the ethnic group is one of the functions of the CLC. Via the addition of traditional cultural knowledge into textbooks as well as holding various kinds of traditional culture activities, trainees are supposed to confirm and be proud of their ethnic identity. To be more specific, the CLC in Liushao and Lianhe County operates like Figure 5-3 as follows:

![Figure 5-3: Structure of CLC in Yunnan](image)

The CLC is rather a bottom-up model, where trainees from local community establish the training center by themselves and they can be involved in the implementing phase. The principle of CLC is empowering people which not only focus on income generating or skill development but the well-rounded development of human resources.

**Funding:** the CLC is financed both by Ford Fund and local government. Local government provides funding for primary schools to organize training activities. While Ford Fund Training cover the expenses of infrastructure of the CLC.

**Quality control and supervision:** since this CLC is a research program belongs to the National Education Science “eleventh five years” plan, a research report was generated by Yunnan Normal
University. This report serves as assessment of the progress of CLC and was hand over to the National Office for Education Sciences Planning for evaluating the outcome of the research.

Outcomes: Since setting up of the CLC, the training center successively carried out a variety of training activities. Around 1500 people benefited from education and training provided by the center. The training not merely raises human capital of trainees, but also improves their understanding of the rural development process and institutional changes in education. The library enriches spiritual life of training recipients, and strengthens their connection with outside world. Moreover, the CLC also took advantage of geographic condition in Liushao and Lianhe County, as a potato growing laboratory was established, through four years of research and practice, growing potatoes have become a competitive industry for those two counties. Besides, numerous cultural promotion activities have also enhanced respect of ethnic group culture.

5.4. Comparison of the Two Cases

5.4.1 Comparison of Two Programs

Firstly, the two programs are compared from aspects of background, program content, aim and goals, implementation and outcomes to grasp the overall situation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5-2</th>
<th>Comparison of Sunshine Program and CLC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case A</strong></td>
<td><strong>Case B</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunshine Program</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community Learning Center</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) 85% of literate adult in Yunnan, Primary school enrolment rate is 99.6%;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Needs for income generating; low quality of labor force; disadvantaged ethnic group; the industrial structure changed as raising the proportion of secondary and tertiary industry, and improving product quality of primary industry; a large number of surplus labor force.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction of the Project</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time span: 2003-now</td>
<td>Time span: 2001-now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place: Yunnan province</td>
<td>Place: Yunnan province (Liushao County and Lianhe County)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Launched by central government.</td>
<td>◆ Launched by research team of Yunnan Normal University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Local offices operate program under instruction of national office.</td>
<td>Operated by local schools and community committee, supported by local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Technical vocational education and training.</td>
<td>◆ Four different pillars- a training center, a library, a development center and a cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training provider is determined by public bidding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Period progress report is required due to quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Control reason.**

Activity center constitute the CLC.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes and Goals</th>
<th>Short-term vocational training, aiming at developing a national-wide training system for surplus rural labor to transfer to non-agricultural industries.</th>
<th>Aims at empowering rural people, cultivating human resources and promoting ethnic culture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Model</td>
<td>Top-down model, guided and controlled by national office; Trainees have no chance of influencing the design or delivery of the program.</td>
<td>Bottom-up model, local community, local government and schools coordinate the project; Trainees actively participate in planning, implementing and learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Achievement of certain enrollment and completion rate. Successful employment in secondary and tertiary industry in urban areas.</td>
<td>Improvement of quality of human capital resources. Enriches spiritual life of training recipients. Income generating. Preservation and promotion of ethnic culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Planning and Implementation:** NFE is flexible in delivery method and responsive in teaching content. These merits can be easily extracted from these two cases. For case A, its aim is to establish a national-wide vocational and technical training system for surplus rural labor force to improve employability in urban centers. Thus, the program is planned and supervised by national office and the training task is imperative to local office which guarantees its wide spreading. The training only lasts for 15 to 90 days, and the curricula are skills related to catering, hotels, health care, construction, etc. that are in high demand in terms of labor force in urban areas. For the successful employment of the trainees, to have a strong network with labor market is also one of the criteria for choosing training provider. In its design, local offices are in charge of implementing the training program with regard to the policy made by the national office. This bureaucratic structure prolongs the decision making and feedback process from central to local, from policy-making to where practices happen. The whole process takes three levels to get down to the training recipients and they have no chance to influence the training process. But meanwhile, this strictly centralized operation system is strictly supervised in
terms of use of funding, training outcome by national office through quarterly assessment of the local office report.

For case B, as there are multiple purposes of the CLC, namely, to empowering rural people, to cultivate human resources and to promote ethnic culture, the CLC gradually established four paralleled pillars, a training center, a library, a development center and a cultural activity center to fulfill its tasks. While as a participatory-approach program, the planning of the program was accomplished in cooperation between local community committees and local schools. As the CLC was founded to empower local community, training activities organized by the CLC includes basic knowledge, income generating activities as well as ethnic minority culture preservation and promotion. In the operation process, trainees can participate in the designing and implementing of the program. There is no obstacle between dialogue formation between training recipients and training providers. However, due to the rather decentralized structure, the assessment of the program is weaker in comparison to Case A.

**Outcome:** it seems that these two programs are both successful in meeting their aims. It is difficult to say which program is more successful or better, for it serves different purposes. While, it is fair to say that both non-formal programs, to some extent, have contributed to development of rural people and the rural community.

But Case B is comparatively generating more comprehensive benefit to rural people. As Case A only provides technical vocational training to rural migrants, rural people who are benefited from the program are basically literate male adult. As showed by NBSC (2008), Only 36% of inter-migrants are female. Case B targets the local learning needs, not only focus on income generating or skill development but well-rounded development of human resource. Besides, Case B focuses on local, while Case B influences of the whole country.

Case A and Case B as different non-formal programs obviously have some distinct features: 1) Top-down model vs. Bottom-up model: a top-down model is often political-driven. Which means it is often a government initiative and the whole program was planned, executed and supervised by government. Some have argued that such centralized mandate is not effective since what matters is at micro level, for instance, local motivation, teaching-learning process, commitment and so on (Fullan, 1994). Nonetheless, in the case of China where central government is so powerful, this top-down model of Case A seems well-functioning. And the merits of a top-down model, such as abundant available resources in terms of financial, human resources really stand out in the case of China. Of course, for successful operating of the program, central government has to devolute power to local authorities at some point. It is noticeable that one of the outcomes of Case A is successful employment of the trainees. This is because local government has good connection with local labor market which ensures the training to be responsive to labor market needs and employability of trainees are profoundly increased. The Bottom-up model is usually resulting from grass-roots initiatives. This model operates by the ‘insider’ and cherishes opinions and involvement of participants. 2) For Case B,
trainees has chance to participate in different phases of the program. While in Case A, trainees passively accept what has been provided. 3) It is also notable that compared to Case A, in the case of CLC (Case B), the evaluation and quality control of the program is somewhat weaker. Although after completion of seven-year-research, the research team provided a progress report. It is only for evaluation of the research, no assessment mechanism was found in Case B. This may due to the decentralized administration structure of CLC. In the operation of CLC, cooperation is emphasized more than control. 4) In Case B, there are four different pillars: a training center, a library, a development center and a cultural activity center. Case A is just a technical/vocational training program for rural migrants. The difference in design is because of different aims and goals. Case A comparatively has a clear goal to reach which is a certain number of training recipients determined by national office. It emphasizes mainly generation of income and its positive result can be achieved in a short period of time-mostly after completion of the training. Whereas, when it comes to Case B, the situation is more complex. Case B focuses on empowering the local community and pursues well-rounded development of local people. So it has four different centers that perform different function in order to facilitate development of local residence in every aspect. As the CLC have multiple goals to achieve, but no tangible indicator for assessment. The stress of rather vague concept of empowerment may take long time to realize.

Despite the differences, there are similarities showed in these two cases. 1) Government support, in terms of funding, policy and resources, seems to be one essential of both programs. 2) Educational institutions play an important role in successfully delivering the program. This is self-evident as educational institutions are the entities for training. 3) Participation of local community. The active involvement of local communities is critical as they are familiar with local conditions and would be a positive influence. In Sunshine program, trainees are not involved in planning and implementing. But the training provider is from the local community and has good connections with local labor market entities-who are potential employers. This might be one key point of high employment rate in the program.
Discussion

6.1. Education in Rural Development Debate

Over these years, despite the rapid economic growth in China, the growing income gap between urban and rural areas has increasingly widened, reflecting growing discontent. Although income of rural people increased 9.5% in 2007, the urban-rural income ratio reached 3.3:1 - the largest gap of urban-rural income in the world (Cui, 2010). Ge (2008) found out that China was still on the ascending side of Kuznets’ curve which implies the quicker the development, the higher the inequality will be. In China, land holdings per household are very small compared to other developing countries like India and other resources are extremely scarce. Effort has to be made to establish welfare system and allocate more resources to rural areas to attain a more equitable society as well as input on education. In the sociology of education, neo-Marxists consider education as conservative institutions that its role only lies in maintaining and reproducing social order. While, in this study, evidence supports that education is perceived by Chinese government as a mean to facilitate and to be a catalyst for social development. Favorable policies and financial support were imposed to education in order to fully unleash beneficial effects of it and so to achieve individual and national development. Sunshine program is a technical vocational training project in its essence. The principle of the training lies in the fact that any significant socio-economic development is based on the effective delivery of scientific knowledge, practical skills and applied technologies through a functional education system. Technologies and education have been widely recognized as effective instruments for fostering the empowerment of a nation and its citizens. In this connection, in rural areas in China where the majority of the nation’s population live and work, vocational education is regarded as being an essential ingredient for preparing a productive labor force. It is indeed an important medium through which to use science and technologies as ways of creating desired productivity and social wealth. As a result, the quality and scope of technical vocational education impact significantly on labor force performance and on the level of community development (Zou, 1996). Besides, the living standards of rural farmers have been shown to correlate closely with their level of education. Thus, effective dissemination of new, applied technologies through rural vocational education and training has the potential to change the types of economic activities and economic performance levels of rural populations, so contributing to improving their quality of life and level of community development.

On the other hand, CLCs emphasize on the concept of empowerment from grassroots level. CLC embraces more than technical vocational training; it usually contains other functions in order to achieve well-rounded development of human being. And CLC is run by local people and for local people. It is highly participatory for training recipients. The CLC establishment is an effective practice on the idea of education for community development, not only to tackle on the contemporary social
economic problems but also to meet the learning needs of local people in achieving sustainable all-round development in rural areas (Wijayaratna, 2004).

From analyzing the general background of China, and through comparison of the two cases, it is explicit that in fostering rural development in China, education is supposed to:

- conduct research on applied agro-technologies and disseminate advanced ones among appropriate rural areas for the development of agriculture industry (Zertuche, 2005);
- increase the human capital of the rural labor force, improve overall quality of human resources in rural areas;
- furnish different localized programs for different levels of the rural labor force to meet diversified learning needs;
- help rural migrants to raise employability and gain employment in non-agriculture industries in urban areas;
- empower the disadvantaged groups by teaching them to adjust to and cope with changes during development process; improve living quality of rural people;
- in special occasions, for instance, in ethnic group residence (like in Case B), culture preservation and promotion is one important task for education.

As indicated in the 11th Five year Plan, education is centrally positioned in fostering rural development as well as infrastructure building and reducing and exempting the agricultural tax. The key point of rural development rests in the extent to which the large population is transformed into high quality human resources. Education is one of the principal means available to foster harmonious human development and thereby to reduce poverty and exclusion (UNESCO, 1996). However, the ever-pressing needs of rural people for an education which is relevant, equitable and effective are not fulfilled (Chinapah, 2010). The urgent need for rethinking education for rural areas calls for re-examination of the features of rural areas and then a strategy which combines formal, non-formal and informal education together to meet diverse learning needs.

### 6.2. Rethinking Education for Rural People

The Rural population and rural context are diverse and experiencing dramatic changes. It is estimate that, during the period of 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), the urbanization rate will exceed 50%. Also, as continue- modernizing of agriculture industry, there will be a huge amount of surplus labor force. Provide proper training and create employment opportunities for them should be seen as an important part of the transformation equation (Huang, 2010). From 1983 to 2009, internal-migrants increased from two million to 152 million. For those internal-migrants, only 67% have basic education and 64.8% have no technical and vocational training.

Although a certain common base of knowledge is needed for the well-rounded development of human beings, it is rational to say that there is no-one-size-for-all program that can fulfill all the
learning needs in rural areas. Since the declaration of EFA, providing basic education has been the top priority for rural education for many years, and it still should be. However, to cope with the changing process of rural development, it is necessary to pay more attention on what’s beyond formal system. Non-formal education, with the advantages of flexibility in teaching content and delivering model seems more suitable for rural people. In order to make full use of non-formal education, the concept of NFE should be re-examined and broadened. Traditionally NFE has been viewed as a substitute for providing basic education to those who have failed to benefit from the formal schooling. Now, as appropriate, readily implementable initiatives of education and training institutions, it becomes institutionalized strategies of intervention in the rural development process without limitation of confined content and time.

There are various types of NFE programs, for instance, programs for imparting basic literacy and numeracy to out-of-school youth and adult illiterates, skill-building activities related to the productive life of individuals, etc. Also preparing learners for tertiary education, training learners in basic ICT skills, and improving their business and marketing capabilities have become legitimate concerns for NFE (UNESCO, 2002). As presented by the case study, education and training can be flexible and responsive to different learning needs, be it short-term technical training or long term empowerment, and only in this way can education be the vehicle of positive transformation of rural areas. There are no better or worse modes of NFE, nonetheless, some crucial elements can be derived from both cases in order to successfully install NFE programs:

- NFE program should be well planned to ensure that the learning inputs provided are relevant to the lives of the people;
- Continuous government support for NFE program is essential. NFE programs are invariably dependent on support from government or from donor agencies. The support required is both financial and technical, as without initial guidance, it is difficult for community members to establish a program alone (ibid.). Favorable government policies encourage and enable the effective empowerment of rural communities through abundant available resources and incentives for people to accept training. Consistent support also raises the question of accountability and sustainability of the program (Zhang, Xing, Sun & Wang, 2004). Development is a long term process and the intangible benefits of education takes time to happen. In the case of China, because of its strong power and highly centralized administration structure, government plays a vital role in facilitating development.

Community participation is also functionally important for the success of NFE program (FAO& UNESCO, 2002). It provides better sources for identifying the basic learning needs of its members. Further, such participation, enables ‘outsiders’ better and more quickly to understand the culture, the politics and the social fabric of the community. Participation of local community ensures the quality of the program design. It is clear that each NFE program functions with unique locally relevant inputs and processes. The general macro-systemic approach to educational
planning and implementation that functions in the formal sector is unsuitable for NFE. Success stories in NFE effectively also verified the importance of involving the people themselves in the planning and management of every aspect of the NFE program at the grassroots level. Community involvement is important not only for making the NFE initiatives responsive to the needs of the people, but also for creating a sense of ownership among the participants in the program (Zhang, Xing, Sun & Wang, 2004). Besides, NFE must be based on local demand. Demand here refers to infrastructure needed for the program. The need for adopting a demand-based paradigm for initiating NFE programs rests with not only effective use of the resources but also reinforces accountability among the users, who thereby cultivate a sense of ownership. NFE programs can be carried through most effectively by education and training institutions being readily available in the local community, since no sustainable change can occur unless the actual benefits are felt in concrete and observable ways by target groups at the grassroots level (UNESCO, 2002). Local participation can come from local schools, training recipients and entities in labor market.

- Evaluation is crucial for quality control of the program. It also provides empirical evidence for amendment of the program or shed some lights for further initiatives.

6.3. “Education Cannot Do All”

Social development is a complex process result from multiple factors. Education alone cannot achieve desirable results. Cooperation between every aspect of the society is essential for foster development in rural areas. As promoted by Chinese government, research and science concerning agriculture should be closely related to local conditions and needs; as well as cooperation between education institutions and labor market enterprises should be formed as to improve quality and relevance of education. Also, the need for more effective coordination of the work of the different government departments and non-governmental agencies should also be stressed for rural development. So the development strategy promoted by central government can be successfully installed in local level. Mechanism should be established in order to provide a basis for coordination and cooperation between the works of the various bodies directly involved in rural development. To be fully effective such cooperation must clearly exist at all levels and, in particular, at the community level (Velez, 2007).

In the case of China, as there is no specific administration department of NFE, the agencies responsible include various ministries or commissions under the State Council, educational departments at provincial level, enterprises or local governments at county, township levels. The training provider can be local schools, schools that established by educational departments, trade unions, Chinese Communist Youth League, women’s federations jointly at different levels. Democratic parties, social, people’s and academic organizations, collective economic entities and
individual citizens can also set up institutions of non-formal education, by offering advance studies, cultural studies, vocational and technical education or courses on social, cultural life (Zhang, 2002).

Besides coordination between government and non-government agencies, “network should also be established so that technology, research, education, and organization can mutually reinforce each other during the developmental process”, stated by Han C. F (2010), the minister of agriculture, on the National Conference on Human resource of Agriculture and Rural Areas. There is a very important need for research and planning at the national level and within institutions to carefully study market needs in order to achieve a balanced and integrated system of agricultural education geared to meeting real life needs. Effectiveness of education and training is lowered if these efforts are not paralleled by a substantial research input. It is in this sense that the connection between higher educational institutions and field is so important: there is such variability in local geography conditions is unlikely to be successful unless it is backed up by agricultural research substantially geared to the needs of particular context. Higher education can then make important contributions by doing research in promoting local economy and through special support and help for teachers and trainees at all levels (Liu & Zhang, 2004). Like in the case of China, central government stresses the cooperation among research, education and the agriculture industry. And this strategy has already achieved good outcomes. Take case B as an example, the potato growing center was found and after four years of research, it promoted potato growing industry in Liushao and Lianhe county, and benefits both trainees and the local community.
Concluding Remarks and Suggestions

7.1. Concluding Remarks

This research deals with non-formal education in the context of rural China. The aims of the study are to investigate the role of education in the rural development process and to explore how tailor-made non-formal training programs were planned and implemented to meet diverse learning needs.

The first objective of the study is to provide holistic picture of the rural development scenario of China. By reviewing demographic changes, economic status, rural development policy and educational trends and status, the national context of China is formed and this enables further investigation at local level. The second and third objectives are to investigate the role of education via comparison of the two non-formal training programs in Yunnan province from aspect of planning, implementation and outcome with consideration of the national context.

In order to comprehensively answer the research question of the study, secondary analysis was utilized. More specifically, overall picture of the national context and a comparative case study were studied through analyzing data from national reports, program reports, government policies, etc. Major finds of the study reveal that in China, education plays a vital role in foster rural development. Besides providing universal 9-year-compulsory education to all, various types of non-formal educational programs were launched to facilitate rural people in many aspects. For effective function of a NFE program, three elements are critical, namely: well-planned in relation to the rural context, continuously support by government and active participation of local community. To serve the development process of rural areas, the concept, role and other aspects of NFE have to be further studied.

Change in rural areas is inevitable, marked by movement of people, demographic transition, and new economic pressures and opportunities. It is crucial to turn the unpredictable consequences resulting from changes into positive developments and enhancement of people’s capacities to cope with change.

If investment in education in general is so justified, investment in rural education is even more so. This is accentuated by the fact that countries have largely continued with the urban bias in the allocation of resources. While the most disadvantage group live in rural area which causes disparities between urban and rural and which lead to unsuccessful harmonious development of the country.

In the time of knowledge society, education can no longer be seen as a time-bonded endeavor but rather a continuous activity through one’s life. The point of education for rural development is to provide opportunities for the underdeveloped group to understand and cope with the changing reality.
and so to have better choice to improve their lives. In NFE program, education becomes a continuing activity that can be transformed into skills and capacities rather than something that begins and ends in itself. The merits of NFE should be profoundly explored and so to benefit rural people. Nevertheless, education is not a magical cure, to reach prosperity in rural areas, cooperation should be formed in every sense and level.

**7.2. Suggestions for Further Research**

In view of the findings and limitations from the present study, the following suggestions for future researches are proposed:

- The conceptual and operational issues regarding "rural", "rural development", "empowerment" and enhancement of capabilities of people and the role of different form of education (formal, non-formal and informal) need further exploration;
- This research is a secondary analysis, a research that include field work would be of great importance to examine the attitude, interaction among different stakeholders and within the teaching-learning process;
- Comparative studies deal with capacity strengthening at multiple level would be valuable in order to see the readiness of educational institutions, actors involved in the training at each level;
- The role of NEF should be investigated more in other developing countries where rural people accounts for large composition of the population. Then, comparative studies can be formed between different national contexts.
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